

Facial Nerve Neuritis: an Integrative Approach

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Abstract Objective: Facial nerve neuritis is a widely spread pathology of the peripheral nervous system. It causes a lot of discomfort. The aetiology of this pathology varies greatly; in some idiopathic cases it is not clear and therefore makes treatment complicated. The aim of this research is to show that applying complex therapy based on the TCM for treating facial nerve neuritis is efficient and safe. **Methods:** Combined corporal and auricular acupuncture with tapping on clustered needles, moxibustion, blood-letting, Sujok, was used. This complex therapy helps to relieve and remove the symptoms by strengthening the yin energy, improving its circulation, removing pathological Cold, stimulating blood circulation and releasing muscle tension. **Results:** Encouraging results were obtained in the use of complex therapy for treating facial nerve neuritis. A number of cases of successful treatment were presented. **Conclusion:** This complex therapy can be applied as a complement of or as an alternative to medication treatment. It offers a possible cure for many patients suffering from facial nerve neuritis. No contraindications were found.

Facial nerve neuritis is a widely spread pathology of the peripheral nervous system.

It is a diagnosis that is seen on a person's face. It causes a lot of discomfort. It is impossible to wrinkle the forehead, to move one of the eyebrows, to close one of the eyes, to smile and to show the teeth; the face is distorted, the mouth is lopsided; the eyes are watery. A psychic trauma is due to the disfigured appearance.

The etiology varies greatly; in some idiopathic cases it is not clear. It can be caused by infections. Many patients have high titers of antibodies to herpes, influenza, adenovirus etc. It can be related to traumas, ischemia and diabetes. It can be of otogenic origin. The condition is often provoked by a prolonged exposure to cold.

Modern neurology suggests various diagnostic methods. They involve testing

- 1) hearing;
- 2) the sense of equilibrium;
- 3) tear production;
- 4) the sense of taste;
- 5) and salivation.

They also include computerized tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and electromyography (EMG).

The treatment normally consists of resolvents, decongestants, antispasmodics, vasodilators and analgesics.

In difficult cases the treatment can take up to 6 months and depending on the cause of the illness up to 40 % of the patients don't recover completely. The existing methods of treatment are not always efficient. There is a need for research into non-medication methods of treatment.

In our experience, the ancient method of acupuncture can be both efficient and safe for treating facial nerve neuritis. It can complement other therapies.

We apply complex therapy based on the TCM and inspired by the modern integrative medicine. We combine different methods to enhance the effect of the treatment.

We use the following acupuncture points:

E – 44, G 1-2	to strengthen the Yin-energy and remove Cold from the channels related to the intestines and stomach
GB – 43, TR – 2	to remove Cold from the channels related to the three warming organs and to improve the circulation of the energy in the facial area
GB – 20, TR -17	to improve the circulation of the energy in the channels related to the three warming organs and the gall-bladder
JM – 12	to remove Dampness
Gilebertus – 4	to improve the circulation of the energy in the channels related to the intestines and the stomach in the area of the head and to remove external pathogenic energy
Gilebertus – 11	to improve the circulation of the energy in the channels related to the intestines
VB – 34	to remove energy blockade in the upper body
DM – 11	to strengthen the Yin-energy

According to the traditional Chinese medicine, the facial nerve neuritis is caused by insufficient primordial Qi, the emptiness of the channels. And the reason for the disease is often Wind-Cold damage or Wind-Heat damage. That's why it is very important to use the stomach channel, the large intestine channel, Du channel (the posterior midline channel) and the bladder channel. We also use points corresponding to different muscle groups on the face.

DM – 13, DM – 14, JM – 24, E – 3, E – 4, GI – 19	to the area of the mouth and chin
E – 6, E – 7	the area of the cheek
DM – 25 and GI – 20	the area of the nose
IG – 18 and YB – 3	the cheek-bone area
Y – 1, E – 1, E – 2, YB – 1, TR – 23	the area of the eyes
YB – 14, Y – 13, DM – 24, E – 8	the area of the forehead

We apply acupuncture to the unaffected half of the face in order to relax its muscles and release muscle tension in the affected half of the face.

We apply the following auricular points:

APUD – 11	cheekbone
APUD- 29	back of the head
APUD – 8	eye
APUD – 84	mouth
APUD – 2	palate
APUD – 97	spleen

During the acute period we recommend daily acupuncture sessions. Normally, a course of treatment consists of 15 daily sessions.

We combine classic and auricular acupuncture with moxibustion on the same points, Gua Sha on the spine, Sujok.

Our results are encouraging for the use of the TCM for treating facial nerve neuritis.

In our clinical practice we have had a number of patients suffering from facial nerve neuritis.

By the end of the treatment there was a considerable improvement in all the patients' condition. Most of them recovered completely. The symmetry of the face was restored. The facial muscles' motion activity was restored. We managed to remove stagnation and stop inflammation. The patients' general and psychological condition improved. This boy went for a swim in the lake. The next morning he woke up with a disfigured face. The electromyography (EMG) shows a positive change in the patient's condition. The nerves are being restored. This patient took medication treatment for three months but it didn't help. There was no hope for complete recovery when he came to our centre. The electromyography (EMG) shows a positive change in the patient's condition. The nerves are being restored.

We can come to the conclusion that

1.

Acupuncture is an efficient approach to the treatment of facial nerve neuritis. It can quickly relieve and often remove such symptoms as pain, muscle tension, inflammation etc.

2.

Corporal and auricular acupuncture can be complemented by moxibustion, Gua Sha, Sujok. This complex therapy strengthens the Yin energy, stimulates its circulation, removes pathogenic Cold and Dampness, relieves stagnation, releases muscle tension, alleviates pain and improves the person's appearance.

3.

Using acupuncture is safe. Acupuncture can be applied as an alternative or as a complement of the medication treatment. We didn't find out any acupuncture contraindications.

4.

In difficult cases, acupuncture can be very effective as a supporting therapy.

5.

Acupuncture helps to improve the patient's general well-being and has a positive effect on their psycho-emotional condition. It helps to decrease nervousness and anxiety.

6.

The success of the treatment depends on the causes and gravity of the disease, the associate diseases and other factors.